

Thomas Thompson, a consultant to hospitals and physician groups, moved to a beautiful and remote box canyon just west of Rifle, Colorado, with his wife, looking forward to retirement in Colorado's natural splendor. That remote, pristine box canyon, however, has been turned into a dangerous heavy industrial zone by the oil and gas industry. Convoys of trucks installed 300 unconventional natural gas wells in the area and many open pits for fracking wastewater.

Since the first well went in 11 years ago, he and his wife began having severe nosebleeds, headaches and dizziness and often cough up blood. In that time span, they have lost 5 dogs to cancer and a 6<sup>th</sup> is currently in remission. A 7<sup>th</sup> dog drank from the creek after a shale gas spill and died within an hour. Their neighbors have similar chronic health problems and have also lost dogs and livestock to cancer. Their local physician notes high rates of respiratory disease since drilling came to the area.

Although their property value has decreased at least 40% with the oil and gas operations, the Thompsons are planning to move. "The oil and gas operations have destroyed every reason to be here and it's too dangerous to stay", Thompson notes. A few other neighbors have already moved, but most can't afford to sell in the face of such a large loss in their property value; they are trapped.

But the Thompsons sure didn't pack up without a fight. Unlike many other residents, who have been intimidated by the frank threats and bullying of the oil and gas companies and have given up trying to get help and problem resolution from their area councils and county commissioners, and the state COGCC, Thompson and his wife continued to attend all the area energy council and county commission meetings and hearings throughout the years, and to speak up. They filed complaints with the oil and gas companies, with the COGCC, and even come out to Denver to testify to the legislature back around 2007. They fully expected that their local elected officials and/or the state regulatory agency and/or their Colorado legislators would rise to help defend their community from gross and uncompensated damages to their enjoyment of their property, their quality of life, their area land, water, and air, their property values and their health, but have not found that to be the case.

The complaints they filed with the state COGCC in 2005 still have not been resolved (unfortunately, a typical outcome) and every level of representative government seems to have failed their community. Finally, they filed a lawsuit against Encana, a huge challenge, given that Colorado law requires the complainant to prove specific harm and the oil and gas companies hold all operations information as proprietary.

When the Thompsons move, they will be leaving behind a large portion of their savings as property loss, a substantial portion of their expected lifespan, and moving in to the future with the burden of increased medical expenses for the rest of their lives. But not even 11 years of living an oil and gas industry nightmare has been able to shake their firm belief in the American dream, of a representative government that stands to defend Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness.

They ask you to remember them and their neighbors in Rifle Colorado in every bill you consider this legislative session and to do all within your power to restore those heretofore inalienable rights to all Coloradans, those fundamental rights that the oil and gas company has taken from them thus far with impunity.

Their telephone number is listed below, should you wish to talk with them : 970 625 8177